

## PRESS RELEASE

### News Release

#### Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group

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#### Australian Firefighters to Bring Down Under Fire Strategies to Idaho Wildfire Conference

**Boise**—Australian fire experts have been scheduled to highlight the upcoming Idaho Wildland Fire Conference to be held at the Doubletree Riverside Hotel in Boise on October 8 and 9, 2008. The two day conference, now in its third year, has been designed to provide a forum for collaboration between firefighters, officials from local, state and federal governments, and county emergency services.

In 2007, over 2.3 million acres burned from wildfires in Idaho alone, creating the worst fire season in over 80 years and burning more than any other state in the country. Although the 2008 Idaho fire season has been relatively calm, firefighters, the public and public officials have not forgotten how devastating wildfire can be.

"It is important for us to look at how a fire-prone country like Australia has dealt with wildfires in these past years," said Idaho State Fire Plan coordinator Steve Kimball. "Instead of evacuating a home during a fire, homeowners in Australia are trained and sometimes encouraged to stay in their homes and protect the property so that it does not succumb to a wildfire. We want to learn more about it and see whether such a strategy is realistic for Idaho."

The "Stay and Defend" philosophy, which has been utilized in Australia for over 40 years, will be discussed by Keith Harrap, Assistant Commissioner of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service at this year's conference. The conference will focus on three themes: structural protection, restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems, and fire education and communication.

Also speaking at the conference is Alan Tresemer, fire chief for the Painted Rocks Fire Rescue Company in Darby, Montana. Painted Rocks is one of the first fire departments in the West to adapt the "Stay and Defend" concept.

"In addition to the talks by Harrap and Tresemer, the conference will also include a discussion of land-use planning in the Wildland-Urban Interface," said Kimball. "We will also hear from state and federal land managers about whether federal agencies will continue to be able to provide funding for fighting fires on private property, and also hear information about creating new community fire protection districts."

The Idaho Wildland Fire Conference will be held at the Doubletree Riverside Hotel in Boise on October 8 and 9. Early-bird registration for the conference is currently available at <http://www.idahofireplan.org/iwfc/> until September 13 at a cost of \$85 (\$110 after that date). For more information, contact Brett Ingles at (208) 426-2844 or [bingles@boisestate.edu](mailto:bingles@boisestate.edu)

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